

## December 2014 Newsletter

Greetings Friends and Neighbors,

As 2014 comes to a close, a recap of some of the happenings this year in Cottage Grove is in order.

First and foremost, I thank you for your interest in local government. Once again I can report that all of our Boards, Commissions and Committees are filled with great people. The Board recently approved the creation of a Village Law Enforcement Committee (2 citizens) and a Village Board of Police Commissioners (5 citizens). Within 10 days I had contacted 9 people whose names I had; only 2 of them told me they could not serve because of work or other commitments; 7 said a resounding YES! Amidst some turmoil about the cost of a Village Police Department, receiving positive responses from 7 people to get involved in the new department was a very positive sign for me.

Village Administrator Matt Giese has been spending significant time working with the construction company and other vendors who started the remodel process just minutes after the closing on the C. L. Swanson property on Progress Drive. Our newly renovated Municipal Services Building will not only house the Village Police Department, but also the Public Works and Parks & Recreation Departments. The Police Department will be moving in (or already moved in) by December 31. The other two Departments will follow sometime in March or April. There will be at least one meeting room which can be used for recreation programs; the extra land bought will provide space for some outdoor recreation programs or future municipal building(s) if needed. There is room to expand current inside space for all three departments for the next 20 or so years.

Making the decision to split from the Joint Police Department was difficult. After due diligence in determining the financial feasibility and the Moffett report regarding operations, the Board made the only decision it felt it could make. Our choices were: 1) stay with a Joint Department and every year pay a higher percentage of the total costs, while receiving roughly 40 percent of the services; 2) employ the Dane County Sheriff's Office while receiving less coverage than we have now **and** have no control over costs; or 3) create our own Department. The Board acted decisively based on the information presented. Please read the Moffett report and see the recommendations made.

We've had inquiries from several companies about coming into Cottage Grove. At this writing I can't give you specifics, but watch the *Herald-Independent* for information. The two businesses I mentioned in the last Newsletter are performing their due diligence and should be breaking ground within this next year. We had a few businesses leave leased spaces; however new ones will be moving into most of the spaces.

The Community Development Authority (CDA) will be appointed in January. Filling the CDA with knowledgeable and very interested residents was also uplifting.

Thanks to Andrew Day (Cable Coordinator) and the Public Relations Committee we have upgraded some of our cable equipment. There are new microphones on the tables in front of the Board and I understand they pick up sound very well, even from the quietest of us! We will be able to expand our program offerings in 2015. I point out that the money for this new equipment came from the Charter Cable Fund and not from taxpayer monies. Be sure to check us out on our facebook. New posts will be made as often as possible.

The Combined Emergency Government Committee is working on updating the Town and Village emergency plan. The plan is completed except for some of the additional appendix information needed. We should have it finished and ready for adoption by the Boards in February or March 2015.

The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Committee had a revised plan for Bakken Park approved by the Board. I applaud them for their efforts and hard work during 2014, as I applaud all who are involved in local government.

With the cold and snow already here, our Public Works Department is already in a 'winter mode'. I publicly thank them for all the work they do during all seasons of the year.

I believe I can speak for the entire Board when I say that we welcome input from our citizens. We value your comments, questions and concerns. We especially value those who work hard on committees to help make the Village of Cottage Grove a great place to live. I hear from many people, including new businesses, that they are so glad they moved to Cottage Grove because of the friendliness, acceptance and caring shown to them. Keep up the good work!

The future of Cottage Grove depends on those who govern and the staff who support them as well as our citizens. If a Board doesn't look at the past and then work towards the future, we will not move forward. We do not take our responsibilities as elected officials lightly. Please take time to check our websites for upcoming meetings, look at the agendas and if something interests you, take the time to come to the meeting.

I wish each and every one of you a great Holiday season and a Very Happy and Productive New Year.

My best,  
Diane Wiedenbeck  
Village President